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THE

VOICE OF EXPERIENCE,

OR

THOUGHTS ON THE BEST METHOD

OF

CONDUCTING MISSIONS

IN THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

IN ITS PRESENT STATE.

BEING THE RESULT OF CONFERENCES AMONG SEVERAL CLERGYMEN.

FOR SALE BY

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PREFATORY NOTES.

I. This Tract might have been as well entitled a Plea for Conscience, for the preparation of it has been no thoughtless undertaking, but after years of deliberation, has been commenced and carried through in the solemn exercise of conscience, and to vindicate the rights of conscience. It is also intended to be a Plea for the Unity of the Church. Those who put it forth are ardently attached to the Church, as well on the ground of its Scriptural constitution, as of expediency.

They most earnestly deprecate its division. For, although they belong themselves to that portion of the Church which has most to complain of in the matters hereinafter to be exhibited, yet when they look to the whole Christian interest, they do not believe its prosperity would be promoted by division, but the reverse; and they are prepared to argue and to act accordingly.

The reasons why they think that the views here set forth on the subject of Missions, will tend to the preservation of the Unity of the Church, will appear in their place.

II. In the following discussion no pains will be taken to avoid the terms high and low Church, or their equivalents. They will be used in their conventional sense, and not invidiously. All science requires the use of descriptive terms, and it is hardly necessary to apologize for the

use of those on Church questions, which have been current for nearly two centuries; nor will we mock the reader's intelligence, by seeking to express what they imply, by a tedious circumlocution. Those who resort to such circumlocution, contrive nevertheless to make their ideas palpable, and generally more distasteful to those against whom they are directed, on either side.

And so of the terms Evangelical and Tractarian; they will be used as the commonly received and most accurate exponents of the ideas which necessarily enter into this discussion. No doctrines will be charged under these names which the parties do not acknowledge.

With regard to parties in the Church, (or *Schools*, if the term be preferred,) there are not only none now who deny their existence, but there are none who have taken the pains to form an intelligent judgment upon the subject, who deny that the difference between them is a very serious difference. In this state of things, all wise and good men must desire te see the causes of irritation and conflict reduced to the smallest number possible.

III. It is intended to give this Tract an extensive circulation, and it asks the impartial examination of all into whose hands it may come, as well laymen as clergymen; and especially does it ask of those who may not, from their ecclesiastical position be expected so readily to agree with its general conclusions, to say whether it be not an impartial statement of the case.

THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE.

THERE is a time for all things. Of course there is a time for Missions; and if they are neglected by any Church, when their time, their set time has evidently come, such Church must suffer serious loss in all her interests.

If the Episcopal Church has done less than others in this work, it is to be charged to hindrances accidental, peculiar, and temporary, and not to any special inattention in her people to the signs and duties of their time.

A Missionary spirit was a part of her inheritance, through God, from the Church of England.

In 1796 the Convention of New York organized a Board of Domestic Missions, and employed the next year a valuable missionary to labor among the scattered Episcopalians and Indians in the western part of that State.

He was succeeded in 1798 by our now venerable Presiding Bishop, who has carried the gospel by our church to so many places where it had not been before. The New York organization, nearly extinct in 1800, was revived in 1801, and again in 1816; for in 1820 it presents a fourth Annual Report, has an income of $900, and one missionary among the Oneida Indians. A similar diocesan Society was formed in the Valley of Virginia in 1819, and employed several missionaries.

In the year 1820, as the result of an evangelical influence acting centrally in Philadelphia, was organized

"The Protestant Episcopal Society in the United States, for Foreign and Domestic Missions." On account of the necessity for co-operation, in order to accomplish anything of consequence at that time, the Society soon had in it (at least among those who governed it) a majority of high churchmen, who were the more numerous, the high churchmanship of that day being comparatively of a very moderate complexion. Still, there were dissatisfactions, and controversies, and resignations, on this ground, of which there are special records, and still more special recollections, for the year 1827.

This Society, according to its first Constitution, was to consist of the Presiding Bishop as President, twenty-four Managers, to be appointed by the General Convention, and all persons contributing three dollars annually to its funds. In 1822 a Catechist was appointed for Liberia, and the title of the Society changed to "The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States," and some slight additions made. In 1823 the Society sent out its first Missionary, the Rev. Mr. Horrell, to St. Louis; in 1828, Mr. Robertson, to Greece; and so on until 1835, when it had thirty domestic, and four foreign Missionaries—two in Greece, and two in China, with an income of $37,000 for the preceding fifteen months.

We have now come to the memorable year 1835. At the meeting of this Society for that year, held simultaneously with the session of the General Convention, important alterations were proposed, and so earnestly pressed, that it led to the dissolution of the Society, by the voluntary action of the majority, and the consignment of its work to the General Convention, to be constituted and carried on by that body, and continue thereafter the creature of the Ecclesiastical Government of the

Church. It was objected to the old Society, that it was a *voluntary* Society; although, by its previous action, it had so limited the voluntary principle as to make it more a Church Society than the P. E. S. S. Union now is. Its constitution, under its last form, could not be altered but by a concurrent vote of the Society, and the General Convention. Still it had some important features of the voluntary principle left. The members became such by their voluntary act, and by payment of money, and elected their Board of Directors. But its freedom stood especially in its having connected itself with the General Convention, by the exercise of its own will, and in retaining the power constitutionally to limit, or hinder any further government by the Convention.

All this was changed, and every feature of the voluntary principle cast out. The *Church* was declared to be the Missionary Society, and every baptized person a member, without enquiry as to his will in the premises. There ceased in fact to be any Missionary Society, in the ordinary sense of the term. The *Church* undertook the work as being hers, in her corporate capacity, necessarily and (as then ascertained) *exclusively*. All this was urged on the ground of conformity to the primitive Church.

These positions were controverted at *that* time, and they are worthy of, and likely to receive a much more dispassionate examination at *this* time. It cannot, in the first place, be shown that the primitive Church conducted her Missionary operations exclusively through a direction created by the ecclesiastical authority. All this has been assumed, not proved; nor is it by any means probable, but the contrary. But we will even suppose this to have been true, still the mistake of 1835 was in supposing that, because the work was so conducted in Apostolic times, it must necessarily be so conducted in all times,

however altered in circumstances. And how extensive and often mischievous is this false reasoning! We find out, (as we suppose) how certain things were in the Apostles' times, in modes of operation; and without waiting to enquire, (even if we were sure of having ascertained what the primitive way really was) whether it was not merely prudential, and variable, we hastily conclude that such must necessarily be our rule, under circumstances entirely different.

Take an illustration, which more than meets the case. The whole frame-work of the Levitical economy went upon the ground that Jerusalem was the place where men ought to worship. There was the one altar, temple, and priesthood of the Jewish Church; and there the males were commanded to present themselves three times in the year. This law was not only observed, but binding, so long as the Jewish people continued in their own land. But how was this possible in the time of our Lord? The Levitical economy was adapted to an unmixed people, in a small territory, with a capital easy of access to all; and these *circumstances* conditioned its obedience. After the dispersion it was no longer possible.

A great change of circumstances had taken place. And it is no answer to say that this change was not in accordance with the divine will. It was a fact; and it changed the rule of obedience in externals. We no where find our Lord or his apostles reproving the Jews for the change; on the contrary, by the conformity of their own example, they themselves acted upon it.

So of the Christian Church. Its outward circumstances are so changed in the process of ages and of divisions, that to say of any particular external mode of operation, that it is *primitive*, no more determines our obligation in the premises than a similar assertion would have deter-

mined the obedience of the Jews to the Levitical law in the time of our Lord. Nay, their case was much stronger; for they had not only the *undoubted* practice of the primitive age, (which we have not,) but the express letter of the law.

The Christian institute is broken up by divisions, somewhat as the Jewish institute was broken up by the dispersion.* We are divided not only into many denominations, but even in the same denomination, and especially in our own, there are parties, or schools, if the name be preferred, as much estranged from each other, as each one from some other denomination nearest in doctrine, and which renders it impracticable for us to do, in our corporate capacity, all things which "the Church," abstractly considered, is bound to do.

The plan of 1835 may be the true plan in *theory*. But it is one of those plans, the availability of which depends on the Church's being in its true normal state, and the error of the evangelical party consisted in their overlooking this fact. This plan must necessarily fail where there are serious and extensive differences in the Church. For, suppose that in case of such differences, the majo-

* It may be asked,—What shall the end of these things be? A question which one is not more bound to answer than another. But there is a solution full of the sweetest consolation and hope to every Christian mind. The outward evils of the Jewish institute were never cured, (even for the devoutest longings of the pious,) but grew worse and worse;—or rather they were cured by substitution. A new dispensation supervened. The time came when the true worshippers worshipped God neither in Jersualem, nor in the mountain of Samaria, but wherever they might be, in spirit and in truth.

So of our present mournful divisions and troubles. *When Christ cometh he will restore all things;*—not all the former external things of christianity, but all that those things were intended for, viz., the universal service of God.

rity should happen to be in error, (not an inconceivable case surely,) the whole Church is made a party to its propagation through its missions. It becomes, therefore, one of those measures which, whether best in theory or not, is liable, in certain states of the Church, to become the very worst in practice.

There were not wanting, indeed, in 1835, those who foresaw the evils of the change then made, and who testified against them to the last. Among them was the present Bishop of Pennsylvania. But the words of those who were for it, were fiercer than the words of those who were against it, and they carried the day. The new movement ignored all parties, and repudiated the idea of elective affinity in toto. At least it professed to do so; though the parties to it were instinctively conscious that the whole success depended on allowing the affinities of the old Society to be carried into the new. Hence, the tacit understanding—tantamount to a written compact—that the control of the Foreign department should be given to the Evangelical side, and the Domestic department to the high Church; though it was hard to say which was most strenuously exacted, the exclusion of the *terms*, or the practical recognition of the *principles*, which they represented. We feel unwilling to say that this movement was contrived and carried out by high churchmen, for the extension of their own views; no doubt they acted sincerely and honestly, as high churchmen, and it is not necessary to say more, in this place, respecting its real origin. It is certain that the cry of peace and union, with an abundance of hope, won for it a decided majority of the old Evangelical laborers in the missionary work. But what has been the result? The record is instructive. Truth and error have worked according to their own nature, notwithstanding the brilliant hopes of 1835.

Note the following extract from the Sermon before the Board of Missions, at its last triennial meeting, by Bishop HOPKINS:

"Fifteen years have passed away since the Church beheld the apparent annihilation of party spirit in your great Missionary organization. Then, for a while, there was an exulting joy in the union of discordant elements. Then, for a while, we seemed realizing the meaning of the Psalmist, 'Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' But, alas! the reign of internal peace was brief and transitory. The adversary devised a subtler scheme than ever, and the old spirit of discord revived in a new form, more potent, and beguiling than before. The result has been that the missions of the Church have labored for a considerable time under the heavy disadvantages of discord and suspicion. And at the present moment, there are many who see no remedy for the existing evil, but in the abandonment of the constitution, and a separate organization, according to party lines, in which the zeal of each may operate, without check or hindrance, in its own way. For myself, brethren, I am bound to say, in candor, that I have no share, either in the credit or the responsibility, of our present constitution. I confess I had no faith, at the time, in the apparent fusion of parties. I doubted the policy of attempting a kind of organization which was perfectly new in the history of the Church, and believed the end could be accomplished far more safely in the form of a voluntary Society, which the experience of others had fully tested. I voted accordingly in the negative, along with a small minority. Nor have I since seen any reason to question the correctness of my position." This is the matured judgment of one who claims to be of neither party in the Church, and who, after an impar-

tial observation of fifteen years, says, it has turned out just as he expected.

Upon full experiment, the new organization has failed, or shown itself less adapted to the work, than that which it superseded. He does, indeed, subsequently say, that, as it has been adopted, it had better be adhered to, "on account of the controlling necessity which I see for unity." This brings his view of missions as a practical question at present into harmony with the design of the Sermon, viz., the "fusion of parties, or unity."

It has now become an urgent question, whether there be such a reasonable probability of this "fusion of parties," that the missions of the Church should be kept waiting upon it indefinitely, though under the "heavy disadvantages" referred to;—whether, or how long, this universally acknowledged embarrassment should be suffered, from a state of things of which (though Bishop Hopkins may consider it as temporary) no one can see the end. It becomes us solemnly to consider what are the true *grounds* of this embarrassment; the *extent* to which it has increased, and the *remedy*.

I. *The true grounds of this embarrassment.*

They are plain enough, viz: The essential disagreement of the parties, which are mechanically united in the work of Missions. They differ on the life-question of the Gospel. If any difference can be fundamental and vital, this is, and must involve the consciences of both parties. That this *alleged* difference is the true ground of the embarrassment, even Tractarians do not deny. Is it merely a *supposed* difference, (or such an one as may be tolerated,) or is it, as here asserted, fundamental, and, to human view, irreconcilable? To answer this question, we have but to state the doctrinal views of each party;

and to color or exaggerate either, would be to hinder, rather than promote the object of this essay, as will appear before we close.

The views of the Evangelical side cannot be stated, with more accuracy, than in the doctrinal (of the thirty nine) articles. They need not be recited here.

The views of the Tractarian side we will take from Bishop HOPKINS's "Humble Address to the Bishops, Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church, on tolerating among our Ministry the Doctrines of the Church of Rome. 1846"—a production as remarkable for its candor and impartiality, as for the clearness and unanswerable force of its argument.

After quoting the open avowal of the leader of the Tractarian party, that the decrees of the Council of Trent were to be tolerated as matters of opinion, and alluding to the secessions to the Church of Rome, "as not the worst result of the Romish feeling, which, to the astonishment and grief of the whole Church,* has sprung up so lately, and increased so fast among us," he quotes eleven of the the thirty-nine Articles, and shows the radical difference between them, and the views held on the points contained in them, by Tractarians. We quote what he says upon two of them, as sufficient:

"Our 19th Article asserts, in plain terms, that the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith. But the Tractarian evades this, by saying that he thinks just as Rome does, with respect to the matters themselves; and he reconciles himself with the Article, as he supposes, by telling us that, in his mind, they are not held as matters of faith, but only as matters of opinion.

* The Bishop was mistaken in supposing the *whole* Church to be grieved by this doctrine.

"Our 11th Article asserts the cardinal doctrine of Justification by faith only, in plain contrariety to the Council of Trent; which confounds justification with sanctification, makes baptism the instrumental cause of our first justification; our good works the instrumental cause of its subsequent increase; and our inherent righteousness the ground of our final acceptance. *The Tractarian here agrees with Rome most fully.*"

We might follow the Bishop through his argument, which fixes the whole doctrinal system of Rome upon the Tractarian party, as matters of opinion, (that is, things believed to be true); but it would be proving more than enough for our purpose, for the evangelical body will protest to a man, and with all the energy of which they are capable, that the apostacy of the Tractarian party from the faith of the Church on the doctrine of the *eleventh Article*, is of a more serious nature than any thing which divides the Church from Methodism, or Presbyterianism. Dr. MOEHLER is right in declaring that this doctrine conditions the whole system of Protestantism. If conscience binds the evangelical members of the Church to any thing, it binds them to disconnect themselves with the propagation of this error, in every form, directly or indirectly, where they may be properly held responsible.

But Tractarianism, it may be said, is confined to a few persons in the Church, and comes not, therefore, necessarily into the question of Missions. Would that this were true; but it is not true.

The Tractarian portion of the high Church party is the active and governing portion of it. Practically, they are the majority of the high Church party. No censure of their errors, even in the most moderate shape, can be passed in the General Convention. Dr. SEABURY was the first to endorse, in full, the doctrine of Tract No. 90;

a tract which shocked the moral sense of Christendom, and indelibly stamped its author as a wicked man. "The principle of this tract," says Dr. SEABURY, in his paper of the 14th of March, 1846, "we did not hesitate to adopt; and we can only look back on the intemperate opposition which it has received, with a sense of shame, not for the Church, for it is no growth of hers, but for humanity." And Dr. SEABURY was the first choice of the clergy of the Diocese of New York, for Bishop, and but for the laity might have been Bishop now; and it is understood that if doctrinal unsoundness had been the only objection to him, his plurality of the clerical vote would have been larger. But who does not know that the clerical majority of the Diocese of New York is in full sympathy with the majority in the Board of Missions? We do not say that the majority of the Board of Missions "adopt the principle" of Tract No. 90; but they are in full ecclesiastical sympathy with those who think Dr. SEABURY'S views to be no bar to his elevation to the highest office in the Church. The leaders in the Board of Missions are the leaders in the Tractarian party; and that the principles of the one are carried into the administration of the other, and the evangelical portion of the Church made to "serve" with these principles, is manifest to every one who will look at the facts. Take it even in the foreign department. The compact which gave the control of that department to the evangelical party, and without which the Society could not have been formed, was violated at the first opportunity. One of the Society's Foreign Missionaries, lapsing into Tractarianism, he was taken up by the majority of the Board, and supported over the heads of the Committee, on party grounds, for years after he had not only become perfectly useless as a Missionary, but was embarrassing the whole

Foreign work. Nay, can we now believe it, he was actually made a Bishop, without a Diocese, and without a single presbyter! His Tractarian friends went every year into the Board of Missions, and there bound heavy burdens, and laid them on the shoulders of conscientious men, which they themselves scarce touched with one of their fingers.

The Committee were compelled to support the now Bishop SOUTHGATE, after it was manifest that his expenses could not be raised by his own friends. And even after an expenditure estimated at more than $70,000, upon this so-called Missionary, and his projects; and they had all ended in utter nothingness and vanity, the Missionary himself having given up, and returned home, the Board of Missions, which met in Cincinnati, in 1850, must still instruct the Foreign Committee, not only to establish this mission, but to procure the judgment of Bishop SOUTHGATE, as to the proper mode of carrying it on; when the Board knew that the Committee had long lost all confidence in his judgment, irrespective of doctrinal unsoundness.

With respect to China, who that attended the meetings of the Board, in 1844, can doubt that if there had been a Tractarian connected with that mission, or who understood the language, he would have been made the Bishop? With respect to Africa, all those in the field were passed over, and the Rev. Mr. GLENNIE was elected Bishop, who had never been in Africa, and was understood not to be in ecclesiastical sympathy with any missionary there. He did not accept.

Let us now look into the Domestic department, with special reference to which this tract is written.

We cannot well see how the high Church party, if they hold their peculiarities to be important, could have

consented, conscientiously, in 1835, to put the propagation of their views beyond their control, in the Foreign field. Much less can we see how the evangelical party could have consented to the same thing, with respect to their views, in the domestic field, especially when, by giving up this field to the control of the other side, they put it into their power to control both, by means of the increased majorities which the multiplication of small dioceses, by the domestic missionaries, would soon give them in the General Convention, a power which, as we have seen, was speedily exercised as well in reference to Foreign, as Domestic Missions

But there was this tacit understanding, on both sides, in 1835. The evangelical side have submitted to the invasions upon their own field, but with complaint and protest, which has been their only remedy, short of their withdrawal from the Society. With respect to the Domestic field, they have consented to have no voice in it, thus far; and they would, in all probability, continue this consent, had not another virtual infringement of the compact taken place in this department. In 1835, Tractarianism had obtained no standing in this country; and no one supposes that the evangelical party would then have gone into this Missionary Society, with the understandings then had, if they had, for a moment, contemplated as likely what has since taken place.

It is not complained of, that high Churchmen have been almost exclusively employed as Domestic Missionaries. But very many of them have been of the extreme Tractarian and Romanizing stamp. It would be invidious and uncalled for to mention them by name, with their Romish opinions and practices. A single example may be taken, to represent a large class, and this example is cited because the missionary in question made *himself*

conspicuous, by the publication of a "Manual," &c., in Missouri, which should have subjected him to trial and expulsion from a Protestant Church; and though it was virtually dedicated to the Bishop, no censure was ever passed upon it, (so far as the Church knows,) either by the Bishop, or the Board of Missions.

And this Romanizing Missionary is but a sample of numbers who hold the same views, and who, by means of the small dioceses which they have been employed to establish, have acquired a controlling influence in the legislation of the Church. In charging all this however, so disastrous (in the opinion of the evangelical side,) to the Protestant character of the Church, we would not be understood as censuring the Domestic Committee. We may suppose them opposed to Tractarianism themselves, (although we must confess we have no knowledge of their being very seriously set against it,) but suppose they are —suppose them earnestly Protestant — they have a Romanizer proposed to them for appointment as a missionary; one whose appointment, in their private opinion, would more likely prove a curse than a blessing. What are they to do? If they should refuse him, on the ground of Tractarianism, they know perfectly well that, at the very next meeting of the Board, they would either be displaced, or censured, or legislated into obedience.

Besides, it is a question how far they would have the right to refuse him. They must know that a part of the funds at their disposal, was contributed by persons who agreed in opinion with the proposed missionary, and would wish their money to be appropriated for the extension of their own views.

But suppose the committee themselves to be opposed to the evangelical interest in the Church; of course then every thing under their administration must be expected

to work against that interest. In such a state of things, while it is manifest that the evangelical portion of the Church cannot be satisfied, and ought not to be, it may still be pertinently asked, wherein is the Domestic Committee to be blamed for managing, in their own way, a department which was by mutual understanding to be theirs. It is not so much their fault, as the fault of the system, which was wholly unfitted for a Church so much divided as ours was in 1835, and much more at present. The result of this system is, as might have been anticipated, a FAILURE.

II. The *extent* of this embarrassment. Has it been only partial, such as all such enterprizes are liable to; or has it been such as to indicate an inherent defect in the system—something organic and incurable? We may be content, on this head, to take the acknowledgments, lamentations, and protests, of the Tractarian friends of our Domestic Missions, as now constituted. Bishop FREEMAN, in his Sermon before the Board, in 1847, has the following, in reference to "the cries for paltry sums appropriated to support self-denying Missionaries. Shame to the Church, that there should be any occasion for them!" Again—"The total destruction of our missionary enterprize at home, in our own land, is seriously apprehended." If this was the case in 1847, what is it in 1851, when the income of the Domestic Committee, exclusive of the "miscellaneous" department, is less by some thousands of dollars than it was in 1847?

We might quote at any length acknowledgments that the Society, as now constituted, has not the confidence of the Church; but the facts of the case wholly supercede the necessity for acknowledgments or arguments. In the report of 1837,—the first report of a full year, un-

der the new system,—there is acknowledged for Domestic Missions, $21,000. For the year 1851, there is acknowledged, exclusive of the "miscellaneous" head, $19,000. In the year of the new organization, the Church had about forty thousand communicants. In the year 1851, it had eighty thousand communicants. And it will not be denied, we suppose, that in the last seventeen years, the Church has shared in the vast increase of wealth and power in the country. But, in 1837, the Church gave for Domestic Missions at the rate of fifty cents per annum for each communicant. In 1851 she gives less than twenty-five cents.

The Presbyterian Board of Domestic Missions received in 1835 the sum of $28,000. In 1850 the sum of $79,000. In 1836, the Presbyterian Church gave at the rate of thirteen cents per annum for each communicant. In 1850, at the rate of thirty-eight cents. They started with us at about one-fourth the amount. After fifteen years, they have risen to three times the original rate. We have fallen to one-half—statistics these, recorded with the deepest sorrow.

And how long is this to be endured? Can it be that our high Church brethren, *wish* it to be longer endured? Can it be that they would hinder us from laboring in the domestic field upon our own principles, when they know that we never can, and never will co-operate with them in their domestic department, until it is purified from the leaven of Tractarianism? Will they so purify that department? Some who act with them, we have no doubt, would gladly do so. But how can they? So far from it, the direction of such movements is not backward, but forward.

Would they sooner see the field lie waste, or be cultivated by other denominations, than see it occupied by

evangelical or low church Episcopalians? It is for them to say. We have no hesitation in answering a parallel question. We would co-operate in occupying the field by high churchism, as it stood in 1835, provided it could be kept as it then stood; but we would much sooner see it occupied by any of the denominations commonly called orthodox and evangelical, than to see it occupied by Tractarianism, as developed in the Missionary in Missouri, already referred to.

The last point of enquiry will be,

III. The Remedy. Our experience, and the experience of others, leaves no room for doubt, as to what this remedy is, viz.: a return to the *Voluntary Principle*, in its freest exercise. What friend of Missions would wish to see two hostile and irreconcilable elements struggling longer in controversy, when it is universally seen and acknowledged that the result is to quench the missionary spirit among us—hinder the progress of the Church, high and low, and increase the alienation of its members more and more? If the question were now to be decided, and with our present experience, every body knows that the plan of 1835 could not be adopted. Why, then, should we persevere in an experiment which has so signally failed?

It is too late for any one to suppose, that the evangelical portion of the Church will support a plan which contributes almost exclusively to strengthen Tractarianism, which gives that complexion to the new dioceses formed, and through them to the General Convention, more and more. And we put it to the consciences of high churchmen to say whether, if this Constitution of the Missionary Society had been found to work as much against

their views of truth, as the other side have found it to work against theirs, they would adhere to it for another hour? They know that they would not. It is without a parallel that one-half—(for it will not be denied that, at least so far as the effective support of Missions is concerned, the evangelical portion of the Church constitute at least one-half of it)—it is without a parallel, that one-half of the Church should allow fatal errors in doctrine to be taught by the other half, in the name of both; and all this in such a way that the measure of the success of these errors on Missionary ground, will be the measure of their success in the legislation of the Church. The grievances of the evangelical side, in the action of the Board in the Foreign department, have been very great. In the working of the Domestic department, they are intolerable.

And let the Tractarian party say, whether they have not had their grievances with this system. Their heart knows its own bitterness with respect to the Constantinople Mission.

Had not this party been laboring under some sense of disappointment and wrong, it could never have used its power in the Board to send the Foreign Committee to Bishop SOUTHGATE for advice so late as 1850. Nor could it have manifested the spirit which it did at the meeting of the Board in 1851, though the mission was dead, twice dead, and plucked up by the roots.

The spirit then—and often before—brought to light at the meetings of the Board, told to every observer, by a method more convincing than all the logic of the schools, that no body of men composed of such elements, can be God's instrument for kindling in the Church the flame of missionary love. This is not the work of a house divided against itself—the abode of jealousy and passion,

aggression and resistance, where measures are continually being introduced, which tend to presumption on the one side, and to irritation and despair on the other. How utterly is the very genius of the work misjudged! A Missionary organization conducted in the spirit of its professed object, is an inestimable blessing to all who have to do with it, benefactors and beneficiaries; to the first not less than to the last. It would be hard to say, whether the Church Missionary Society, though a foreign Missionary Society, has done more good to the Church of England, or to the heathen of Asia and Africa. Such an institution is pre-eminently calculated to gather together in one, the best affections of the Church, and to pour them forth in refreshing streams among those who are without.

But how far is this true of our organization? There stands the precious vessel, nearly dry, by the confession of all, while so many are perishing of thirst. And shall we think to remedy the evil by the constant driving of canonical and ecclesiastical bands and hoops upon the vessel already nigh to being crushed inwards? Shall we remain longer insensible to the lessons of experience?

In order to success in the missionary work, it must be controled and informed by a united, harmonious and all-sympathizing body; a body which is the home of confidence, charity, and prayer. A body animated by such affections will, by its action, surely touch the souls of the Christian people, and call forth their prayers and their alms, nay, their children, for the work; and nothing else can. Unless such a body can be had, the work is dead.

And can such a body be constituted, by mechanically forcing together the elements now in such antagonism in the Church? Harmony and confidence between the different members of the Board, as now constituted, is not to be hoped for, and every body knows it.

What, then, is the remedy?—for the Missionary work must be done, or we are faithless to our Lord, and a lost Church. *We say, without hesitation, that the only remedy which the case admits of, is in a return to the voluntary principle.* Let each interest work by itself, under the laws of elective affinity. Let the *right* so to work be universally and freely conceded, for it is a right which the General Convention cannot justly take from the members of the Church. All Christian work cannot be done "by authority;" and it is by constantly enlarging the boundaries of authority, that authority comes to be a grievance, and a party majority becomes the real author of schism. *

But it may be objected that, if the foregoing arguments are good for our return to the voluntary principle, in the work of Missions, they are good for a division of the Church. Not so. We do not look upon division as a remedy for evils. A division would not call off the Tractarian from his error, but only confirm him in it, while it would not leave the evangelical more free to propagate truth than he is now, (or would be if he could have liberty in the missionary field.) The General Convention, thus far, have not materially abridged the Christian liberty of

* Our Missionary Society, if regarded as "general," on account of its being the creature of the ecclesiastical government of the Church, may be illustrated by the case of our "General Theological Seminary." That Institution cannot be really *general* in its character, that is, aiming to suit the main divisions of opinion in our Church, without being so neutral, so excedingly moderate, and tame as to become inefficient, and unpatronized, suiting none. If it have any efficiency now, it is because it is not *general*, except in organization and name, but has become the Seminary of a party. With that party it has favor,—and for the purposes of that party,—life and energy. This is so well understood on all sides, as practically to abate the wrong of its being called a "General" Seminary.

the members of the Church. Congregations may elect the ministers of their choice; and so they have no hindrance in their own parishes; may be as high Church, or evangelical, as they please, and no one is likely to meddle with them, or can, unless there be some gross excess beyond former example. Individual Bishops may, if disposed, carry on a petty annoyance, but generally, the minister in his parish is unrestrained by any external pressure. So long as this is the case, each party must deplore a separation, which, aside from all the evils which it would carry into so many communities, would put a most effectual bar to the influence of what each party might consider to be the truth, upon the other.

Division will not become a necessary evil, until such time as a majority in the General Convention may impose regulations or canons which would wound the consciences of the minority, and bind them to that which they believe to be sinful. If such a time should ever come, the fact of the majority being found at the time to have the missionary work of the whole Church under their control, would not hinder a final separation of the parties, but the contrary.

We cannot concur in the opinion that the continuance of the present missionary system will promote the unity of the Church. On the contrary, in addition to its lamentable failure in its intended work, it has proved one of the most fruitful sources of irritation and distrust. Let it be given up freely, by both sides. Nothing like it ever succeeded. The Roman Catholic Church itself has nothing that answers to it. It is a most ill-advised measure to oppose longer the fixed desire of so large a body of the Church. Let each party be free to do good, in accordance with their own conscientious views of truth and duty, without hindrance from the other.

In the event of this return to the voluntary principle, our present domestic work would properly remain in its present hands, with liberty to the evangelical side to undertake any similar work, if they should see fit. Surely, the field is extensive enough.

The Foreign work would of course remain in its present hands, and be carried on by the evangelical interest, with liberty to the other side, who have felt grieved at the discontinuance of the mission to Constantinople, to renew it under the exclusive guidance, and at the exclusive cost of its own friends. So at least the theater of vexing between Ephraim and Judah, would be so far reduced; and then, unless our Christian people be really different from others, our missionary work would revive, and be carried on with power.

Can it be that evangelical Episcopalians, now doing comparatively nothing for Domestic Missions, would not rise to their responsibilities, if the way could be opened before them! All eyes are turned to "the West"; "the great West"; "the mighty West"; that world beyond the mountains—an expanse for the development of human life unparalleled beneath the sun. Can we look into that "Valley of decision," where so many Christian agencies are being set on foot by all who are partakers of the Christian life, and not bear our part in emancipating so many millions from sin and death? Too long have we been held back from the work.

NOTE.

In the winter of 1850–51, it was contemplated by a number of persons, clerical and lay, to propose publicly the organization of a Domestic Missionary Society.

While this was in contemplation, the movement in the same direction in Pennsylvania was announced, and it seemed proper to wait that experiment. This movement, considering the quarter from which it comes, seems to rebuke the want of zeal in those who strongly profess their attachment to the evangelical interest in the Church.

It wishes, apparently, to save the cause, and at the same time, to save appearances. Nominally, an imperium in imperio, it is in fact an independent Society; and would have been loudly denounced as schismatical, (it is now in some quarters,) if it had been formed before it had been so clearly discovered by those who controlled the old Society, that they could not command the confidence or support of the Church.

It is, perhaps, too soon to look for definite results from this enterprize, which seems wholly in the right direction. Notwithstanding its government being confined by its constitution to persons within the Diocese of Pennsylvania, we should for the present feel all confidence in entrusting funds to the disposal of those who have it in charge, leaving it to time and experience to decide whether this will permanently meet the necessities of the case, or whether a general institution will become necessary. It is for the work to be done that we are concerned, rather than for the persons who are to do it.